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Guatemala may provide

Home Economics Classroom

by Helen Hochriem

HOME economists may soon study at Iowa State's new tropical research center in Antigua, Guatemala. While the plans at present are neither specific nor definite, the program will offer, when fully developed, opportunities for study and research by outstanding home economics seniors and graduate students in addition to the project of corn research in charge of Dr. I. E. Melhus of the Department of Botany.

The outpost will consist of a 10 room building of Antiguan design with a slat plant house and grounds for agricultural experiment plots. A 50 room bungalow hotel run by an American citizen will provide living quarters for the staff members while a dormitory will house the graduate students. The Iowa State College Guatemala Research Committee, consisting of five staff members and three or more interested people outside of the college, will provide the facilities for student research and training in the tropics. Cost of the construction is being borne by the college, while a group of Guatemalan citizens have formed the Hacienda Company, Inc., to provide the land and buildings.

Undergraduate students planning to do research work at this center will begin to plan their course in the junior year so that an adequate background in language, history, biology and agriculture may be obtained. Before leaving for Guatemala, they must matriculate at Iowa State and have the recommendation of the dean of the division in which they are enrolled. In addition, each student must bring to the center a detailed outline of study prepared with and approved by the dean.

AT the outset, only graduate students and seniors will matriculate at the center, although in special cases, outstanding juniors may be eligible. The enrollment will be limited to 10 or 15 per year. Graduate students will attend as fellows attached to some project, and their program will include conver-

sational Spanish and a seminar course in tropical research, as well as active participation in a research program.

In some programs, the major portion of the work will be done out of doors, such as field work in plant and animal sciences. Other programs in home economics and social sciences may take the student into the homes of the people. It is hoped that the student may become better acquainted with the various social levels and their modes and standards of living.

It is in such a plan as this that the home economist would be able to contribute much to the future development of these people through observation and research. Students of high quality and outstanding ability would be allowed to carry on research work in textiles, foods, nutrition, home management, institutional management, child development and possibly in every major home economics curriculum offered at Iowa State.

IN foods and nutrition, home economists could study various types of foods the people consume and different methods used in their preparation. The latter may suggest modifications for the preparation of American food. The mystery of how these underdeveloped people have been able to survive from generation to generation on a diet consisting of 95 percent corn could probably be solved by a nutritional analysis of their food consumption.

The Guatemalans have always been noted for their brilliant designs in fabrics and textiles. A study could well be made of this native Indian art with the purpose of adaption for use in this country.

In home management, studies could be made relating to Guatemalan scales of living, for knowledge of this kind would be helpful in a program of gradual education with the idea of raising standards of living of some of the people. Ultimately, such a program would have to be initiated from their own government, but preliminary studies might prove important.



This Spanish style house is the home of Dr. Melhus, head of the Iowa State tropical research center. A new hotel to be constructed in front is planned.